

United States Senate

September 12, 2014

The Honorable Dan Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Washington, DC 20240

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Dear Director Ashe:

I am pleased to learn that representatives from Mohave County, the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have identified a plan and cost estimate for restoring trout-stocking operations at Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery (NFH). I commend you and your personnel for your leadership in this collaboration.

The proposed solution, developed in coordination with USFWS personnel and supported by the parties, calls for the construction of a floating pump-platform assembly at an estimated cost of \$776,448. This solution is believed by engineers to be less costly and more redundant than repairing and extending the existing pipeline. The platform would be anchored near the hatchery and adjustable to fluctuations in river levels. Similar pump systems are reportedly used in both agriculture and commercial operations, including on smaller scales near the hatchery and inside Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

As you know, I recently toured Willow Beach NFH and met with state and local-elected officials who emphasized the hatchery's contribution to the local economy. According to an analysis provided by AZGFD, trout fishing supports around 1,700 jobs and generates approximately \$75 million in economic activity along the Mohave County/Clark County stretch of the Lower Colorado River. Trout-stocking is important to the area's angling community and falls under the federal government's longstanding responsibility to mitigate for lost fishing opportunities resulting from the construction of the Hoover Dam.

I remain committed to restoring trout rearing at Willow Beach NFH. To this end, I respectfully request that you identify resources and programs within the Service that would be useful in advancing the proposed pump-platform solution. I would also ask that you consider the utility of entering into an intergovernmental agreement with those entities offering to assist with this project, and that you coordinate with the Bureau of Reclamation to secure reimbursement funding in support of the trout mitigation mission. As you may know, the Government Accountability Office has identified 38 federal hatcheries that are engaged in a mitigation mission, including specifically Willow Beach NFH, and urged Congress and the Interior Department to ensure federal water agencies, like the Bureau of Reclamation, fulfill their responsibility to provide support for these hatcheries.

Finally, let me emphasize that I ask that this matter be handled in compliance with established rules, regulations and guidelines, and that I am not seeing preferential treatment that could possibly be

construed as unfair or inappropriate. I expect only such action which is in the best interest of the nation.

I look forward to your timely response to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John McCain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and the last name "McCain" clearly distinguishable.

John McCain
United States Senator

cc: Mr. Lowell Pimley, Acting Commissioner, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation